

THE
PASTOR's Care and Dignity,
AND
The People's Duty.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
Assembly of Ministers,

AT
TAUNTON, 7th September, 1692.

By G. Tross

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The P R E F A C E.

Courteous Reader,

HAD not the unhappy Product of a former Piece. pleading for a Seventh-Day Sabbath, a few Months since morally necessitated; and the Importunity and earnest Intreaties of those whose conjunct Desires were deem'd cogent and undeniable Injunctions, now constrain'd, you had never seen the Author in print; than whom scarce any one more desires Retiredness and Obscurity, or was resolved more against appearing in Publick: But as the former Discourse was judged seasonable and proper to obstruct an Error, so this Sermon has been judged (both by others) to be beneficial and useful for Practice, especially for the Regulators of others Practice (the Ministers of the Gospel) unto which if it conduce any thing, you ought to thank those

The PREFACE.

who have wrested it from me; for I could not judge it worthy of any better Fate, than other of its Companions, even to breath out its last gasp in the Pulpit, and to lie buried ever after in scatter'd Papers.

Concerning the Sermon itself, I shall onely say, I have been as exact as well as I could in sending the same Discourse to be printed, that was preach'd. (only a Scripture or two may be added, which were in the Notes, but not deliver'd, because of too great Prolixity, and some little Alteration in a few words,) which if it conduces as much to the Glory of God, and Spiritual Good of Others, (chiefly of my Brethren in the Ministry) as I was made to believe by my charitable, and judicious Auditors, 'twas adapted to; I have all my Design, and my Prayer is, that God will make it so.

VALE.

THE
Pastor's Care and Dignity,
AND THE
PEOPLE'S DUTY.

I Cor. IV. i.

*Let a man so account of us, as of
the Ministers of Christ, and
Stewards of the Mysterics of
GOD.*

THE holy Apostle having in the
foregoing Chapter sharply re-
prov'd the *Corinthians* for their
factious Adhering to, and Applauding
of one Minister, or some Ministers, with

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,
 the Contempt and Rejection of others,
 and declaring them to be carnal, ignorant,
 and silly in so doing, backs his Re-
 proof, and proves his Charge by several Arguments :

1. As that all Ministers have the same Function and Calling, are all Labourers with God.

2. That they are all imploy'd in the same Work, and carry on the same Design, the Manuring of God's Husbandry, the Advancing of God's Building.

3. That whatever any Minister does of good, whatever success he has in his Labours, 'tis not from himself, nor from his Labours, nor from his Parts, (his Learning & Eloquence) no nor from yet his Graces ; but 'tis alone from God's Blessing, and by the Operation of his Spirit. Wherefore the Apostle concludes with an express Prohibition of this carnal and sinful Practice.

4. Let no Man glory in Man, for all are yours : Whether *Paul*, or *Apollos*,

Ios, or *Cephas*, all Ministers; whether Apostles, or Evangelists, or others, are the Churches for her Edification and Salvation, with all their Abilities, Parts, Graces, and Labours, which are for the Spiritual Good of the People of God; of what Parts or Opinion soever, all those that are found in the Fundamentals of Faith and Practice, that teach what we ought to believe and do that we may please God here, and be saved by him hereafter; tho' they have different Apprehensions of things at greatest distance from the Foundation, and about the Fringes of Religion.

And having thus reprov'd them for and dehorted them from this Over-valuing of, and Doting upon some Ministers, lest as 'tis usual with imprudent and unconsidering Persons, they should run into the other extream; and because they must Idolize no Ministers, they should Conculeat them all; and because they must not Over-value any

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

one, they should Undervalue every one of them ; he begins this Fourth Chapter with the Text, *Let a man so account of us, &c.*

Explication
ἀντιπροσέτις.

A Man indifferently, every Man, the highest and greatest, as well as the the lowest and meanest, the most learned and unlearned, account, judge, and esteem ; be rationally convinc'd and satisfied in his own Mind that we are.

λογίζεσθω.

ὑποφύλαξ.

Which primarily and immediately signifies Rovers in, about, under a Master or Patron ; and is from thence drawn and used to signifie other sorts of inferiour ones in Service, as here Ministers or Domestick Servants ; yet not of the meanest or common sort of Ministers and Servants : But,

ἐκδονέμενος.

Stewards, Dispensators, Distributers of Goods from *δοῦναι* & *νέμω*, *tribua, pascō, rego*, to distribute, to feed, to govern ; all proper Acts of Stewards : And so of the Minister's Stewardship there is a twofold Stewardship, A Rural and Domestical, the former being the

the Inspection and Management of the Estate without Doors, Setting and Letting, (as we use to say) Receiving and Disposing of the Revenues, &c. Such a Steward was he of whom we read in the beginning of the Sixteenth Chapter of *Luke*, who behaved himself knavishly and dishonestly in his Place and Trust, and left and resign'd it as knavishly as he had kept and manag'd it; for when upon intelligence of his Unfaithfulness, his Lord discarded him, and required an Account of his Stewardship, and told him he should be no longer Steward; he goes to his Lord's Debtors, and bids one to abate fifty Measures of Oil, another twenty Measures of Wheat, which upon their Account was due to his Lord; that so he might have them for his Friends and Harbourers when he was turn'd out; for he was too proud to beg, and too delicate to dig and work: and they that are so haughty and nice, when they come to Poverty, are in the Road to Dishonesty and Knavery, to get their Livelihood.

I. Our

Verse 8.

1. Our Lord commends the Unjust Steward, not for his Injustice, but for his Wit, for the Abilities that God gave him, not for the Abuse that he and the Devil made of them. The other, the Domestical Stewardship is the Trust and Charge of the Store and good Things of the Family within Doors, to bring them forth, and to distribute them in due time and due manner to the Household, and such an one is spoken of.

*Luke 12.
42.*

2. A Servant whom his Lord made Ruler of his Household, to give them Meat in due season. A Periphrasis and Description of this Steward, as he is expressly call'd elsewhere.

Revelation.

3. A Steward whom his Lord shall make Ruler over his Household, to give them their portion of Meat in due season. And this is the Steward here spoken of, intrusted with

The Mysteries of God; the secret, sacred, hidden Things of God, Spiritual, Heavenly, Evangelical Things, Mysteries, and hidden from the greatest Schol-

and the People's Duty.

27

Schollars, the most learned Philosophers in the World, and from the very natural Man, who cannot discern them as they are in themselves, and according to their own spiritual Nature.

Division. 1. We have here the Function and Office of Ministers, Service and Stewardship; or what they are, Servants and Stewards.

2. The subject Matter of their Stewardship, or the Things whereof they are Stewards, *The Mysteries of God.*

3. The Duty of the People, They must account them so, carry it towards them as such.

— Their Office shall be the Doctrine, and the People's Duty part of the Use.

Doct. 1. That Ministers are Christ's Stewards: Tit. 1. 7. *A Bishop (a Minister) must be blameless, as the Steward of God.* 1. *A dispensation* 1 Cor. 9. 17. *on* (a Stewardship, the same word *οικονομία*.)

as

Col. 1. 25.

as in the Text,) *of the gospel is committed unto me.* So, 2. According to the Dispensation or Stewardship which is given to me for you; the Scripture expressly tells us that Ministers are Stewards, and that their Function and Office is a Stewardship.

Which Stewardship is no ordinary and common Stewardship, but the most excellent and glorious, the most necessary and useful, and the most profitable and advantageous of all other: Which will appear if we consider,

1 Cor. 9.

17.

1. Whose Stewards they are, the Lord Christ's and God's, so expressly said to be in the Text. And *St. Paul* tells us, that his Stewardship was committed to him, *viz.* by the Lord Jesus. And they are usually called in Scripture, the Servants of Christ, Embassadors of God, and of Christ, &c. now according to the Excellency and Degree of the Lord and Master, so is the Excellency and Worth of the Stewardship.

ship. Thus a Steward of the King's Household is a far more honourable Person, and his Office of greater Dignity, then any others ; wherefore the Ministerial Stewardship must be incomparable more Noble in this sence then any others.

2. Over whom, or toward whom they are Stewards, God's House, his Church, the whole Household ; authoritatively over the whole Church, I mean so in a safe and well expounded sence ; that is, being once duely ordain'd and authoriz'd Stewards, they may exercise it toward, or over any Society of Men, either without or within the Pale of the Church ; without in any place of the World, among Heathens or Mahometans, where Providence may have cast them ; they have Authority to gather a Church from among them ; and if they have Ability and Opportunity, they must endeavour it, and being gather'd, they ought to exert the Office of God's Steward over them. Within the Pale of the Church,

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

Church, among what Society of Christians soever God may bring or place them, or by what Communion of Christians soever they may be called, they have there the Authority of Stewards, and if due Conveniency present, they ought to exert it also: For when a Minister for the greater Glory of God, and Profit of the Church, may be called from one Society of Christians to another, that Call collates no new Authority on him, but gives him an Occasion and Opportunity to exert it over themselves. Where-ever a Minister comes among Christians (all other things duely concurring,) he hath Authority to exert his Ministerial Stewardship over them; so 'tis said,

Matth. 24
45.

I. *A Servant whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household*: Indefinitely over his Household, that is, universally, not over some one particular part hereof, or some sorts of Servants therein, but over all. And so,

2. *The*

2. *The Steward whom his Lord hath* ^{Luke 12,}
made Ruler over his Household ; with- ^{42.}
 out Exception or Limitation. So,

3. *St. Paul* having spoken of Christ's
 Body, which is the Church, immedi-
 ately adds, *Whereof I am made a Mini-* ^{Col. 1. 14.}
ster according to the dispensation of God ; ^{25.}

Of the Church, of the Body, not of a
 particular part of the Church, nor a
 singular Member of the Body, but of
 the whole in this sence ; not that they
 can ever simultaneously exert it over
 the Church ; which is the Anti-chri-
 stian Usurpation of Rome, who pre-
 tends to be Lord of all the Stewards
 of God's House, as well as of the infe-
 rior Family : Neither can another e-
 ver successively exert it among all the
 Congregations of Christians, seeing the
 Universal CHURCH is so far dispers'd
 throughout the Face of the whole
 Earth. So that by their Calling they
 have such an Universal Stewardship,
 though they are in their Employment
 limited to particular Parts of the Fa-
 mily and Household of God : Now ac-
 cording

14 *The Pastor's Care and Dignity,*

According to the Greatness and Excellency of the Family over which Stewards are placed, is the Worth and Dignity of the Stewardship; wherefore seeing Ministers are Stewards over the whole Church of God, so vastly numerous, and the Family being the most glorious and excellent for Qualifications and Priviledges, this Stewardship must in Worth and Excellency surpass others.

3. If we consider the Duration thereof, this Stewardship is for ever, during Life, being once taken into this Service and Office of God and the Church; they are always in it, and are bound while they have Abilities, Opportunities, and any of the Family to officiate over, to dispense to them those Things whereof they are Stewards: For tho' Defects in Nature, and Corporal Inabilities, and Persecutions, and Civil Impediments may hinder the Employments of the Ministry, they cannot deprive of the Office and Function, but these being removed, they must be sure

to

to act as Stewards. Every consecrated Minister has nailed his Ear to the Posts of the Sanctuary for a perpetual Service; so saith St. Paul, *Though I¹ Cor. 9. 16. preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me: Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel, having the stewardship of the gospel once committed to him.* A moral Necessity was layen upon him to preach it ever after; and if he should wilfully refuse it, woe would be unto him as a wilful Neglector of the Duties of his Calling. As consecrated Priests and *Levites* under the Law never became profane Persons, but were still accounted Holy to the Lord, and fed and maintained by the holy Things; so neither can they, who under the Gospel are devoted to, and by God taken into this Ministry and Stewardship, ever alienate themselves from it; and if they do, they incur the Guilt of horrid Sacrilege: Indeed there may be some extraordinary Case, wherein it may be lawful for a Man to lay aside his Ministerial

B Function,

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

Function, and assume another: As suppose two Brothers, the one a King, the other a Bishop, (as has been usual, because of the great Riches and Authority of the Clergy,) the King dies without Issue, and unless the Bishop, that next Heir to the Crown, succeeds, there is a Moral Necessity of the Overthrow of Church and State, of the Introduction of Popery and Slavery; and the Law of the Land makes the Regal and Episcopal Dignities to be utterly inconsistent in one Person: I doubt not, but 'twould be the Duty of the Bishop to degrade himself, and to lay aside his Crosier, Miter, and Lawn-sleeves, and to invest the Royal Robes, and take to himself the Crown, the Sword, and the Scepter. But such an extraordinary Case falls not out in many Ages. Wherefore seeing this Stewardship is for Term of Life, it is a more excellent one then those that are but for a few Months and Years, and at the *Bene placitum* of an inconstant Lord and Master.

4. If we consider the Subject Matter of their Stewardship, or the Things they are intrusted with to keep and dispense. In the Text they are called the Mysteries of God; and these are,

1. The Word of God, whereof they are the Preservers and Dispensers, the Preachers, the Expounders, and the Appliers: So *St. Paul* in that forementioned place tells us, that a Dispensation was committed to him, which he calls the Preaching of the Gospel; and so again he tells us, That the Dispensation which was given him, or his Stewardship, was to fulfil the Word of God; not to fulfil it in itself, for 'tis compleat and perfect in itself, and so its own end and design even the Glory of God in our Salvation: for whoever truly believes the Doctrines, and conscientiously obeys the Commands of our Bible, shall certainly be blessed of God on Earth, and saved by him in Heaven: But the meaning is, to fulfil it as a Minister of Christ toward them, in a due, full, plain manner revealing,

2 Cor. 9.

16, 17.

Col. 1. 25.

16 *The Pastor's Care and Dignity,*

Matth. 28. 19, 20. preaching, or writing it to them, and pressing it upon them; and their Commission runs thus: *Go and disciple all nations; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

Mark 16. 15. And so Christ said unto them; *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

The Dispensation of the whole Word is committed to them: Of the Promises, to declare their Riches, their Certainty, and their Condition, and suitably to apply them. Of the Threats, to shew their Dreadfulness, their Infallibility, and their Terms, and suitably to apply them. Of the Doctrines, to shew their Truth, their Harmony, their Natures, their Tendency to God's Glory and Man's Salvation, to expound them, and prove them, and confute all Errors by them. Of the Commands, to teach their Spirituality, their Latitude, their Perfection, and to press them upon the People for their Obedience and Observance.

2. The

2. The Ordinances and Sacred Rites of Christ's Institutions; I mean the Sacraments, which are only two, Baptism and the LORD's Supper, both which are intrusted to Ministers, and as Stewards they only have the Administration of them. So is Baptism, *Go and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Matth. 28. 19. Those same Persons that are authorized to Teach, are authorized to Baptize, and none other, and therefore we say, that if the Form and Matter of Baptism be used by any prophane Person, that is not a Minister, that is Null, and 'tis no Baptism. So is the LORD's Supper; and therefore St. Paul saith, *I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the* 1 cor. 11. 23.

B 3

cup,

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

cup, when he had supped, saying, *This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.* Where he tells us, that he deliver'd to them the Eucharist after the same manner that Christ instituted, as he had received Authority from him. And whoever has a Right, as a Steward of God's Mysteries to Administer one Sacrament, has as great a Right and Authority to Administer both.

Matth. 16.

19.

3. The Discipline and Censures of the Church are committed to their Dispensation, Suspension, Excommunication, Re-admission: So, *I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* Which is not singularly and personally appropriated to Peter, as the Pope would have it, and so to himself his pretended Successors; but was committed to all the Apostles, and in them to all Ministers their Successors

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in the Ministry and Stewardship of the Gospel; *Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.* From which Passages we may gather that Ministers only have Authority to exclude from, and reduce unto, discriminating Ordinancers; though in particular and well-govern'd Churches the People ought to be consulted with, and the Reasonableness of the Minister's Proceedings herein toward any particular Member, ought to be evinced, (and this is according to Scripture) and so their Approbation required: which seems to be taught us in that Passage of our Saviour's, in which our Saviour enjoins, upon the stubborn Impenitency of a Delinquent, upon a secret Address of the wronged Party to him, and upon his taking one or two more with him, that then he should tell it to the Church, and if he refused to hear the Church, and for his Obstinacy be sentenced by the Church, that then he should count him as a Hea-

John 10.
23.

Matth. 18.
15, 18.

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

then and a Publican : Which Sentence of the Church seems to be implied in (as antecedent) the words following, *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye (the Church) shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* And that there should be this Harmony between the Ministers and the People, and that their Consent be had in the Censures, seems to be very expedient, yea, necessary to the Ends of Censures of Suspension or Excommunication ; which are the Humbling and Spiritual Profit of the Delinquent, the Warning and the Security of the Congregation, the Reputation of Religion, and the Glory of God by all. Now except there be a Concurrence between Pastor and People, these will not be produced, for if a Minister should deny the Ordinances to a Person, and excommunicate him, and yet the People own him as a Brother, he'll little regard his Minister's Exclusion of him, and be apt to be more proud

proud and headstrong against him; the People will be no way secured but be in greater Danger to be infected; and by such Divisions and Animosities, Religion will be disgraced, God dishonour'd, and the Devil's Interest exalted. The like will be if the People should separate from a Member, and the Minister own him, the same if not worse Consequences will issue therefrom; wherefore St. Paul expressly enjoyns the Concurrence of the whole Church in Excommunication: Having greatly blamed, and sharply reprov'd them for owning the Incestuous Person as a Member of their Society; he commands them, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, *When ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* So he also enjoyns them joyntly to concur in the Re-admission of that excommunicated Person; when
he

1 Cor. 1.
begin.

2 Cor. 2, 6,
8.

246 *The Pastor's Care and Dignity,*

he had given sufficient Evidence of his unfeign'd Repentance, sufficient to such a Man is this Punishment which was inflicted of many, (many, not the Minister alone, but with his People,) so that contrariwise ye (the same many) ought to forgive him, and comfort him; lest perhaps such a one should be swallow'd up with overmuch Sorrow; *Wherefore I beseech you that you would confirm your love towards him.* Wherefore supposing that a Minister should know a Person to be most unworthy of Fellowship, and most worthy of Excommunication; yet if his Crime be such, as he ought not to reveal, and his People being ignorant of it, and contending for his continuance with them; he may probably suspend his own Act, but 'twould be no way advisable to proceed to a formal Censure and authoritative Excommunication, because so more hurt would redound to the Church, than good: and Ministers ought not only not to do those things which are unlawful; but also

also they ought not to do those things which are imprudent and inexpedient: Wherefore seeing the things that are committed to Ministers, are these spiritual, heavenly, evangelical Things infinitely more excellent, rich and glorious than all the Riches, and Mines, and Concerns of this Life, which are nothing in comparison of them, therefore their Stewardship is more noble and excellent, more useful and profitable than any other.

5. It will also appear if we consider the Ratification of all the Acts of this Stewardship by God and Christ in Heaven; all that they duly perform in their Stewardship, according to God's Word, *Clare non erante*, either in Word or Deed is confirmed by God in Heaven, and shall be made good for ever and ever. The Threats that they pronounce against Sinners and Hypocrites in their Preaching, how presumptuous or secure soever they be, shall certainly be inflicted by God, (if they persevere to be so;) and all the Promises

aises and Blessings that they proclaim to the Godly and Sincere, what sad, hard, dismal, next door to despairing Thoughts, they may have of themselves, shall certainly be made good by God: and so whoever they exclude from the Priviledges of the Militant Church here on Earth, shall be excluded from those of the Triumphant Church in Heaven; according to those Scriptures already quoted, *Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.* And thus we have proved that Ministers are Stewards, and have shewn the Excellency of their Stewardship, and proceed to the Application:

1. *Use of Information.* It serves to inform us,

1. In the great Usefulness and Profitableness of the Ministry in and to the

the Church of God; I had almost said the Necessity thereof thereunto, if it be not absolutely necessary to the *Bene-esse*, the well-being of the Church: What Confusion! what Waste, what Want and Ruine, must the Absence of a Steward cause to a great and numerous Family, wherein are too many unwise and headstrong Persons, too many proud and self-conceited ones, too many slavish and prodigal ones, &c. his Absence would soon dissolve the Household. In the Church of God are too many weak and peevish ones, too many proud and self-conceited ones, too many unruly and extravagant ones, &c. who without the Rule and Guidance of a Minister, would soon dissolve and ruine Churches. This Metaphor therefore shews the Utility and Benefit of Ministers in the Church of God; as do also those others of Fathers, Nurses, Pastors, Shepherds, Guides, Watchmen, and Embassadors, &c. To shew that as these are useful and necessary to Children, to Flocks, to blind
Ones,

Ones, to Cities, and Armies in time of War, and between dissenting Nations, so useful and necessary are Ministers to the Church of Christ.

Use 2. It informs us in the Error of those who judge Ministers to be the most useless, contemptible, and burdensome Persons of the Humane Society, and especially if they be plain, powerful Heart-searching and Conscience-startling Ministers. These profane and ungodly Wretches are grossly mistaken, and under dangerous Delusions.

Exhor. 1. This Stewardship of the Ministers is serviceable for Exhortation; and the Object hereof is threefold :

1. To the Stewards themselves.
2. To those who intend to be so. And,
3. To the Household over whom they are so.

1. To the Ministers and Stewards themselves: And here I will only briefly premise, that though I am very unfit and unworthy to advise or excite you to those things which you know better,

better, and are more forward to do than myself; yet God's Providence, and your Call, bringing me hither, I must be your Monitor and Remembrancer: wherefore I crave your Patience and Condescension toward me, but require your Reverence and Subjection to our supream Lord, while I exhort to some few particulars: As,

1. That you would still consider, and walk constantly under the due Apprehension of the Greatness, the Honour, the Weight, the Consequence of this your Function and Stewardship; a profound and clear Perswasion hereof would be a good, and is a necessary Preparatory to what follows.

2. To be in Abilities, and Qualities, and Practice, and Behaviour what their Function and Stewardship require, and exacts from them: To be such, and to act and do as their Office does call for, in all (as much as possible) exceeding all other Servants of the Family and Household. And here I shall take leave to mind you of some particulars: As,

1. Such

1. Such must be learned (not to mention those Scholastical Sciences, which all hold useful and necessary for understanding, analising, and handling the Word of God, and all others are educated in, before they pretend to be Candidates for this Function:) I would here recommend the Ecclesiastical History, and the knowledge of the Original Languages, at least some competent skill in them, if we can't arrive to a critical & exact one. Every Steward should have the Key of his Store-house at his own Girdle; if not when his Duty requires his Distribution of the Family's Provision, he may be to seek, or else may have a Key with false Wards put into his hand: You are wise to adapt the Simile. To be able to go immediately to the Fountain-head ourselves, must be more contenting, satisfactory, and delightful, then to receive the streams through Pipes, by which we know not what may have been contracted to allay its Purity: And withal, by such a Knowledge we shall

shall be qualified the more easily to vindicate the Scripture from false Glosses and Interpretations which the Unlearned and Heretical are apt to impose upon it, and more clearly prove the Mind of the Holy Ghost therein.

2. Such must be seen, very well seen, in the things themselves, in the matter of their Stewardship, even in all the Mysteries and Oracles of God; they must have a clear, distinct, settled, satisfactory Knowledge of all Doctrinal and Practical Truths; they must have a spiritual Apprehension of them according to their own spiritual Nature: How can a Steward ever be a good Steward, and duely dispense those things whereof he has no knowledge? His Ignorance will make him to mistake one thing for another, to the disgrace of his Charge, and to the detriment of the Family: *The Priests Mal. 2. 7. lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the Messenger of the Lord of hosts.*

His Lips, and to be sure his Head first, must keep Knowledge, before he can distribute it to the enquiring People. So our Saviour saith, *Every Scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old.* He must be stored with all due knowledge of the things of God, and have Treasures of all sorts of them: which that we may attain, there is required a serious, a diligent, a humble, an assiduous and constant studying of the Holy Scriptures, with fervent, frequent, and constant Prayer to God for his Blessing our Study in them, and enlightning our Minds, and enriching our Souls with them. Which St. Paul exhorts *Timothy* to, *Till I come, give attendance to reading; meditate upon those things, give thy self wholly to them, that they profiting may appear to all.* If such an eminent and enlightned Minister as *Timothy* must read and meditate to profit himself more

Matth. 13.
52.

1 Tim. 4.
13, 15.

more and more in Divine Knowledge, then much more have we need; and must it be our Duty to read and meditate daily and constantly, that we may increase therein: I mean reading in, and meditating on the Word of God, which doubtless *St. Paul* chiefly, if not only meant in this his Exhortation to *Timothy*, for he tells him in another place, *That the scriptures were able to make him wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.* ^{2 Tim. 3. 15, 17.}

All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works. So that the Scripture fully and infallibly furnishes us with all Truths, with the Confutation of all Errors, with all Duties to be pressed upon all our People; and with a Discovery of all Sins to be forbidden: And hereby the Steward of God's Mysteries may be completely furnished for the Discharge of

32 *The Pastor's Care and Dignity,*

his Function. And here for the more clear satisfactory Discovery of the Truths of Scripture, and a more ready Use and Improvement of them for the Benefit of the Household of God ; I would exhort to the framing in our Minds of a Methodical Body of Divinity, of all the Articles of Faith, and of all the Duties of Life. A Steward should keep all his Store and Treasure in a distinct Order, or else he may be confounded, when having occasion on some unexpected Emergency, he shall be to seek and not be able to find what is required he should produce : Such a Method of Theology is called, ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, the Analogy of Faith ; which we translate Proportion of Faith, wherein every thing is fitly and proportionably placed, has its proper dependence one upon another, refers each to other, is proved, illustrated, strengthened and confirmed each by other, and 'tis called ἐπολιούσων ὁγμῶν-των λόγων ; The Form or the Scheme of the Plat-form of sound Words, formally

Rom. 12.
6.

2 Tim. 1.
13.

mally so in themselves, efficiently so in others ; being the grand Instrument in the hand of the Spirit to make Souls sound and healthy in the Faith. Such a Plat-form the Apostle would have *Timothy* to hold fast, to have it always with him; and without question 'tis more noble and useful in the Head, then 'tis in a Book: He that hath clearly and distinctly such a Body of Divinity in his Head, and has experienced the Grace of God in his Heart, and keeps alive the Graces of the Spirit, will be prepared upon any warning, within a little time, with his Bible (when he can have no other Helps,) only, to preach distinctly, orthodoxly, and profitably upon any Polemical or Practical Point that may be proposed; by the usual assistance of the Spirit of God. Whereas such as decry and jeer at this as Systematical Divinity, if they should be engaged to discourse upon such a Subject, and have no opportunity to recur to their own common Places and Collections, nor the help of other

The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

Books, would make but sorrowful, jejune, confus'd and blundring work on't.

3. Such must be wise and prudent: The former of these three you may call Learning or Knowledge; the second you may call Sapience or Wisdom; and this you may call Prudence and Discretion: By which I mean a diligent and sagacious Inquisition into, and Discovery of the Condition and State of the Family, and of each Person in it, over which we are stated Stewards; that so we may know what to distribute of the Mysteries of God unto them, which requires a very careful Inspection into them and their ways and doings, and a diligent Converse with them, and Examination of them as far as conveniently we may. A Steward should know the Temper and Constitution of the Family, lest he should give Food where Physick is more necessary, and so hurt instead of benefiting those that are committed to his Charge: he ought to observe whether they work and deserve their Maintenance,

tenance, or whether they be idle and merit nothing; lest he should waste his Master's Goods, by giving them to those who ought to have none of them; Ministers must so endeavour to know the People of their Charge, as to know to whom they ought to apply the Promises; and whom they ought to cheer with the Cordials of the Gospel, and to encourage with all the Priviledges thereof; and to whom they ought to apply the Threats of the Law; and to make them to smart with the Corrosives of the Word, and cast them down by a due Exclusion from Evangelical Communion: who are Babes, and want Instruction and gentle Carriage toward them; and who ought to be reprov'd and severely dealt with: In a word, they ought so wisely and prudently to know their Personal Charge, as to know what is every ones due; and so to give to every one suitably his Proportion and proper Part of the Word, Sacrament, and Censures. Which requires great

Matth. 24.
45.

Luke 12.
42.

measures of Discretion and Prudence: and this is that which is chiefly declared by our Lord Christ in those places where he saith, that 'tis the part of a wise Servant and Steward over God's House, to give them their Meat in due season; when 'twill be most useful for them, and not when 'twould be hurtful to them. And as his Wisdom is shewn in the Seasonableness, so also in the Quality and Quantity of the Meat which he gives them, which ought also to be such as is due to them. Three great Books which a Minister ought chiefly to study, to make him wise and prudent, are the Holy Word, his own Heart, and his own People.

4. Such must be sincere and faithful; they must be Loyal to their Trust, and according to their due knowledge they must dispense what they are entrusted withal. An unfaithful Steward may greatly wrong his Master, and injure the Family, either by an extravagant Wasting, or a clandestine Embezelling of the Goods
com-

committed to him: 'tis therefore an especial Qualification in a Steward, and especially in a Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Steward, that he be true and trusty:

This is the Property our Saviour gives *Matth. 24.* of his Servant and Steward, that he be ⁴⁵

faithful as well as wise, have an honest *Luke 12.*

Heart as well as an able Head, to give ⁴²

his Household their Meat in due season.

And this the Apostle speaks of in the Verse immediately following the Text.

Moreover, 'tis required in Stewards, *1 Cor. 4. 2.*

that a Man be found faithful, as tho' 'twere the only necessary Qualification of such an one. And when he directs

Timothy to the Properties of those that should be intrusted with the Mysteries

of God, he tells him, *The things that* ^{2 Tim. 2. 2.}

thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Now this Faithfulness and Loy-

alty to God, excludes all base and sinister ends of the Stewardship, as, Honours, Riches, Applause from Men, Partiality, Men pleasing, sowing Pillows

under

under Elbows, dawbing with untemper'd Mortar.

5. Such must be diligent and laborious; Stewards must have their heads, their eyes, their hands, their feet busied, or they will never discharge their Office; Ministers must redeem all the time they can from their Recreations of the Body, from Sleep, from Visits; they must imploy and exhaust all their strength in this their Stewardship; they must wear out their Lungs in Praying and Preaching, and blunt their Brains in studying, grudge no Pain nor Labor, devoting their all to, and imploying it in, and laying it out about this their Function: So our Saviour saith, that his Servant must be found so doing when he cometh; that is, he must be always busie and imployed, very industrious and laborious, and that without ceasing; because our Lord's coming is always uncertain. So St. Paul commands *Timothy*, *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead,*

Matth. 24.

*2 Tim. 4.
1, 2.*

at

at his appearing, and his kingdom, Preach the word instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Day and night, at all times he must labor, when any Conveniency presented: And he was a most excellent Practiser of his own Precepts; for he tells the *Corinthians*, That he would very gladly spend and be ^{2 Cor. 12. 15.} spent for them: Exhaust his Spirits, Blood, and all for their Souls good. And when he had at *Miletus* called the Bishops, the Presbyters of *Ephesus*, he tells them in that excellent Speech to them, I kept back nothing that was pro- ^{Acts 20. 20, 31.} fitable unto you: but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house: All day preaching and praying in publick assemblies; and at night instructing private families. And again, watch and remember that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. An excellent Example proposed for our Imitation.

6. Such must be courageous and magna-

magnanimous; Of an undaunted and fearless Spirit in the Discharge of their Office. Stewards must be so, or else every sawcy and unruly Fellow will daunt them, and tread them down, and so either make them cease to Discharge their Duty, or else out of fear to act quite contrary thereto. So must Ministers, because they will meet with Assaults, Accusations, Contradictions, Evil Intreaties from some other of the Family; besides Persecutions of all sorts from abroad, (if the Devil can raise them) even all Persecutions of Tongue, Hands, Sword, Prisons, Gibbets, and Flames; and the more able, wise, faithful, and laborious they are, the greater Oppositions, and more stout and daring Encounters they are likely to meet with, even in the Church are Tares as well as Wheat, Chaff as well as good Grain, bad as well as good Fish, Vessels of Wood and Earth, and to Dishonour, as well as Vessels of Gold and Silver, and to Honour; and from these, if foreign Persecutions come not, they must expect,

expect, and will experience, very great Oppositions and Discouragements, and therefore they must have a courageous Spirit, and a Countenance like a Wall of Iron, and a Gate of Brass; or they will never be able to bear up against, and wade thro' all these: God therefore forbids his Prophets this carnal Fear of Men, as, *Gird up thy loins Jer. i. 17. and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.* So also, *Son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, tho' briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. Ezek. 2. 6.*

7. Such must be zealous for God's Glory, and devoted to his Honour: Stewards must be heartily affected with, and swayed by their Master's Interest, and must look upon their Lord's Reputation as their own grand Concern; and this will engage them to be
pru-

prudent, faithful, diligent, &c. in their Place. So must Ministers be toward God, toward his Name, Kingdom, and Glory. So was St. Paul that glorious Steward, that incomparable Example of all Stewards; who did and suffered more for the Glory of his Lord, and for the Good of his Household, than a-

Phil. II 20. ny other; he tells us, *That 'twas his earnest expectation, and his hope, that in nothing he should be ashamed; but that with all boldness, as always, so then also, Christ should be magnified in his body, whether 'twere by life or by death.* He would labor, he would suffer, he would live industriously, and wear out himself; he would die shamefully, and give up himself for the Magnification of the Lord Jesus. And so in other places he professes, *Bonds and afflictions abide me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so I might finish my course with joy; and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.* So that he might testify the Gospel, and introduce Jews and Gentiles

Acts 20.
24.

Gentiles to believe in Christ, and to worship God, he would willingly undergo all Persecutions home to a cruel and disgraceful Death. And so again, *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.* For his Praise and Glory; so also ought we to be zealous toward it, if ever we hope to fulfil our Ministry. Acts 21. 13.

8. Such ought to be loving and affected toward the Church, and People of God, to set a due Value upon their Souls, and to have an ardent good will toward them: Stewards should have Love toward the Family, rejoice in its welfare, delight in its Prosperity, &c. without which they will either carelessly neglect, or heedlessly and heartlessly perform their Duty toward them. So must Ministers be toward their People; and herein also follow that glorious Pattern St. Paul, who says concerning the Jews, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have* Rom. 9. 1, 3.
great

44 The Pastor's Care and Dignity,

great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: For I could wish myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh. And again, Brethren, my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. The same ardent Love and earning Bowels had he toward the Gentile Churches; so he tells the Corinthians, Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you: for children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. And so also he declares his Love to the Thessalonians, But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the gospel of God only, but also your own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged everyone of you (as

Rom. 10. 1.

2 Cor. 12.

14, 15.

1 Thess. 2.

7, 8, 11.

a father doth his children.) So should our hearts be affected toward our People, and so we should follow that Precept, *Feed the flock of God, and take the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.* 1 Pet. 5. 2.

9. Such must be humble and patient: Stewards must be of a composed and even Spirit, and not be in a passion and storm for every little Miscarriage; else they'll be unfit to manage the Affairs of a great Household. So Ministers must be of a serled and undisturbed Spirit, not soon angry, overlooking, passing by, and disregarding of, and not troubled at the ill Humors, and unhandson and provoking Carriage, which they must expect to meet with from some or other of the Family; yea, from them from whom they least expect it, and least deserve it: This is expressly commanded them; a Bishop must be patient: 1 Tim. 3. 3. and the Servant of the Lord must 4. not strive, but be gentle to all Men,

2 Tim 2.
24, 26.

apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil's who are taken captive at his will. They must imitate *Moses*, and be zealous in God's Cause; but meek and as unconcerned in their own, &c.

10. *Lastly*, Such must be blameless, and free from all Vice, commendable, praise worthy, and shining in all Graces and Vertues, in all Gravity and venerable Deportment: Stewards must be so, or they will never keep up their Authority in the Family: if they be vain or vicious every one will despise them. So Ministers must excel in all excellent and eminent Manners and Practice, -and give all good Examples to their People; so they are enjoyn'd, *Not as Lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the flock.* So is Timothy charged, *To be an example of the believers in word, in conversation,*

1 Pet. 5.
3 Tim. 4.
12.

versation, in charity, in spirit, in faith,
in purity. And St. Paul tells us that
he was so, *Brethren, be ye followers to- Phil. 3. 17.*
gether of me; and marke them which^{20.}
walk so as ye have us for an ensample:
For our conversation is in heaven, from
whence also we look for the Saviour the
Lord Jesus Christ. Which they must
do to confirm their Doctrine; they
must preach out of the Pulpit by their
Lives, as well as in the Pulpit by their
Sermons: this they must do to main-
tain their Authority over, and their
Respect from the Household of God.
So St. Paul directs Timothy to do, ha-
ving commanded him, *Let no man de- 1 Tim. 4.*
spise thy youth. He knew that some^{12.}
Persons would be apt to disdain to be
taught, to be reprov'd by a young
Lad, a beardless Boy, (as we use to say)
& so to contemn him; which he warns
him against, and directs how he may
avoid it, even by being an Ensamble to
the Believers in Word, in Conversati-
on, &c. by shining in all Graces, Du-
ties and Vertues toward God and Man.

And this was that which procured to *John* the Baptist so great Reverence and Respect from *Herod*, He feared *John*, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him, and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. So that his eminent Life and shining Conversation won him, from such a cruel Tyrant, awe to his Person, attendance to his Doctrine, and obedience in many things to his Injunctions; tho' in the case of his *Herodias*, rather than be parted from her, he would part *John's* Head from his Body. The Title that the Holy Ghost gives Ministers, do all engage them hereunto; as they are called Embassadors, Fathers, Lights, Stars, Angels: How grave then, how shining, how exemplary, how heavenly should they be? The chief Graces and Duties which they ought to have and perform, and the great Vices and Sins which they ought to subdue and avoid, we have specified in *1 Tim. 3. 1, 7. Tit. 1. 5, 6, 8.* to which I refer you. In a word, let us but well study

and the People's Duty.

49

study and follow the three Epistles of Paul to *Timothy* and *Titus*; and we shall need no other Canons or Directory: for he tells *Timothy* that 'twas for this end that he wrote those Epistles to him, *If I tarry long, that thou maist know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.*

1 Tim. 5.
15.

Now because I know that thro' the Corruptions of our own Nature, and our base inward Discouragements, and the manifold and great Oppositions and Contradictions that we do or may meet with, Motives are useful to excite us to all these Particulars, I shall take leave to hint some few very briefly, because a word to the wise is sufficient.

Motives. 1. Because of our Lord, whose Stewards we are, there is nothing in him, (as there may be in Humane Lords and Masters,) that can give us the least Incouragement to omit, to be remiss in, or to contradict

our Duty ; but all to the contrary : God is not ignorant, but knows us, and all we do ; he is not careless or heedless, but strictly and exactly observes us, and all our Behaviours ; he is not unconcerned about his Family, or no way touched with our Misdemeanors, and its Wrongs, but very jealous of his own Glory, and his Family's Good ; he is not impotent or unable to Avenge himself, or execute his Displeasure, but Almighty, &c.

2. Because of the Household over which we are, 'tis the Church of God, his Flock and Heritage, his peculiar Treasure, the Apple of his Eye, and the Darling of his Soul, &c.

3. Because of the great and glorious Things that are intrusted with us ; Word, Ordinances, Discipline, Spiritual, Heavenly and Divine Things, subserviated to God's greatest Glory, and to Man's supream and eternal Good.

4. Because of the great and glorious Reward, they shall receive that duely discharge their Stewardship : 'Tis said

con-

concerning the good, wise, faithful and perseveringly diligent Servant and Steward, that he is blessed; and his Lord will make him Ruler over all that he hath. And that the Elders who feed the Flock, and take the Oversight of it willingly, and of a ready Mind, and are Ensamples thereto: when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a Crown of Glory that faderh not away. Ministers, good ones, shall shine like Stars, while others shall be but as the Firmament: We shall be rewarded not according to our Success, but according to our Labour and Faithfulness in our Ministry; for Success is God's, but Labour and Industry is ours by God's assistance, and therefore if there be a Minister more faithful, laborious, zealous, &c. in his Function, tho' he convert no Souls, yet he shall receive a greater Reward then another, who is less so, and converts many Souls.

5. Because of the dreadful Punishment which those Stewards must endure, which are nor, which do not, so

Matth. 24.

46, 47.

Luke 12.

43, 44.

1 Pet. 5. 1,

4.

Dan. 12. 3.

Matth. 24.

48, 51.

*Luke 12.
45, 46.*

as we have been exhorted to: In those so frequently quoted Passages 'tis threatned against the Lazy, the Secure, the Rude, and the Fighting Servant and Steward, *That his Lord will come in a day that he looketh not for him, and at an hour that he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder; and will appoint him his portion with the hypocrites and the unbelievers.* And St. Paul denounceth a Woe against himself if he preached not the Gospel; and so to us, if we do not preach it and practice it as we ought. As good Ministers are ordinarily the best Men, and do God most service, and the Church most benefit on Earth; and so receive the greatest degrees of Glory in Heaven: so bad and profane Ministers are usually the very worst of Men, bring to God greatest Dishonour, to the Church greatest Detriment, and shall lie down deepest in the bottomless Pit.

6. I would add one more to Ministers of our Perswasions, and that is, Because in these days God hath given
us

us so wonderfully our Liberty, hath opened our Mouths, given us Freedom to preach, boldly and publicly to Congregations without fear of Fines or Bonds, and has hitherto to this day so graciously prolonged it to us, and given us a Meeting of so many in Peace, Ingenuity and Gratitude should constrain us to do all that possibly we can for God and his Glory, for Christ and his Church.

We proceed to the second Object of Exhortation :

2. This serves to exhort those who intend for the Ministry, to consider well and wisely what they are about, what the greatness, the weight, the charge of this Stewardship are, and what they ought to be and do that are of this Function, and so not to dare to enter rashly thereon, without the due Qualifications (at least in some good measure,) of Head, Heart, and Life, of Learning and Orthodoxy, of Grace and Experience, of Manners and Praiseworthiness, of Conversation. *St. Paul*

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en-

1 Tim. 3.6. enjoyns that a Minister must not be νεοφυλῶν, a Novice, or a Novel Graft just now grafted in; he must not be a Novice in the Faith, nor a Novice in Grace, nor a Novice in Manners. Persons must not take the Charge of the Mysteries of God to themselves, when they are but little better qualified then the meanest Servants, not so well as most, yea, perhaps really not of the Family of God themselves, of the Invisible Church by Grace. I would not here be thought to discourage all young Men from entring upon the Ministry, (especially now that the *Church of God* is in so great need of Pastors,) for I well know that a young *Timothy* may be as well qualified for it, and demean himself as well in it, as a more aged *Apollon*: But then I am sure such qualified young Men will be the least forward, and the most backward to undertake it, because they know the Naughtiness of their own Hearts, the strength and working of their own Corruptions; they know they have a hard task

to look after, and to keep their own Souls, and therefore they tremble to take upon them the Charge of others Souls; to be put upon keeping others Vine-yards, when they cannot keep their own; and so must be thrust out (as it were) with Violence into the Lord's Harvest. Whereas they who are least prepared and most unfit, are the most forward to undertake the Ministry, and will not be restrained by any Cautions from rushing upon that Function, for which they have no Fittingness nor Preparation.

I proceed to the third Object of this Use :

3. This serves to exhort the Family and Household over which Ministers are Stewards; that in the words of the Text, *They would so account of them*, duly carry it toward them in Mind, Heart, and Practice; I shall mention a few Particulars very briefly.

1. Do you Honour and Reverence your Ministers as in such a Function; for tho' they be your Fellow-servants

1 Thess. 5.
12.

Heb. 13. 17.

1 Cor. 9.
17, 18.

toward God, yet they are your Superiors in the Family, having the highest Office therein, and none above them as they are Stewards of God's Mysteries, (for tho' we acknowledge the Magistrate to have an Authority about sacred Things and Persons, yet he has nothing to do in them,) and so are said in Scripture, to be over you, to have the Rule over you; and in those fore-mentioned Texts, the Lord Christ is said to make his Servants and his Stewards Rulers over all his Household: and that which the Apostle calls Dispensation or Stewardship in one Verse, in the very next he calls Power or Authority. Wherefore you owe them Respect and Reverence, which you must have in your Hearts and Carriage toward their Persons.

2. Obey your Ministers, and submitting yourselves unto them, to their Authority in Christ you must submit, and to their Commands from Christ you must obey: (If what we enjoyn be not according to the Word, do not obey us; as if what we teach be not according to it, do not believe us; and if what we threaten be not according to it, do not fear it, &c.) Whatever we enjoyn or forbid, (if it be proved from the Word of Christ, you must do the one and forbear the other: You are

are commanded, To obey them that have *Heb. 13.*
the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for 17.
they watch for your souls, as they that must
give account, that they may do it with joy and
not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.

3. Love your Ministers dearly, and affect them highly, (in all these particulars we suppose them to be such as deserve the name of Ministers, and do their Duty) for their great Labours, and the great and inestimable Profit they bring (if the Fault be not your own,) to your own Souls: So they loved St. Paul, who when he took his *Acts 20.*
 Leave of them, and told them he should *36, 38.*
 see them no more; wept sore, and fell on his neck and kissed him. And yet more the *Galatians* loved him at their first Conversion, and before they were alienated from him by Underminers and false Teachers, for he bears them Record, *That if 1 Thess. 5.*
it had been possible they would have plucked out 12, 13.
their eyes, and have given them to him; (that is) if thereby they could have done him any service.) And the Apostle commands you all to esteem them very highly in love for their Works sake, *Who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.*

4. Content yourselves with the Portion of God's Mysteries which they distribute

58 *The Pastor's Care and Dignity,*

to you : You must conclude that such are wiser then you, and better know what is best for your Souls, than yourselves ; if they reprove you, if they caution you, look upon it as more proper and useful then Commendation and Encouragement : If they advise you to abstain a short time longer from the Sacrament, till you have gotten more Knowledge and better Preparation ; not to exclude you from it, but that you may come more profitably and comfortably to it, be well content, and do not fling off in a Pet. as the foolish and inexcusable manner of some is, and never come near and hear him more.

5. Help your Ministers in their Charge and Labour, and make it as easie as you can for them : The *Stewardship and Charge of God's Mysteries, and of Souls*, is a most weighty and tremendous Burden, which you should endeavour to alleviate, which you should do, by being thriving Christians in Knowledge and Godliness, for this would be their Delight, and where the Heart is joyful, there the Labour will be easie. By educating your Families (Parents and Masters) in the Faith of Christ, and the Fear of God ; by watching lovingly and prudently one over another, and mutually reprovng, advising, exhorting, warn-

warning, as just cause is given. Were these things duly performed by the People, much of the Minister's Care and Pain would be diminish'd.

6. Pray to God fervently for such Stewards when you are destitute of them; and bless God enlargedly for them when you are furnish'd with them, as one of the greatest Blessings under Heaven. Thus we have finish'd the Use of Exhortation, and proceed to a third.

3. This Doctrin serves by way of Reproof,

1. To Stewards. 2. To the Household.

Repreh. 1. Of all Ministers that either are unable or unwilling to do the Duty of the Stewards of God's House, that either neglect or contradict their Duty either in Language or Carriage, who by speaking or living do poison or disorder the Household, or by silence and laziness starve it, the condition of such Wretches is miserable and dreadful.

2. Of those of the Household who either omit or contradict these Duties they owe to their Ministers, do not so account of them as of God's Stewards, but demean themselves quite contrary; these little consider that the Dis-respects and Injuries they offer the Stewards (the Ministers) are offered to the Lord (even God himself) of the Household; yet he tells them they are so, *He that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that*

86 . *The Pastor's Care and Dignity,*

that sent me, Luke 10. 16. And Christ's and God's Dishonour will redound to your Destruction, if Repentance and Reformation prevent not. I proceed to the fourth and last Use.

This Doctrine also serves for Comfort to laborious Ministers and People.

Consol. 1. To all good, able, faithful, shining Ministers, who faithfully discharge, and duly demean themselves in their Stewardship; such are most excellent and most blessed ones, whatever a proud, foolish and profane World judges of them.

2. To all those of the Family that duely demean themselves toward their Ministers, and in all things do dutifully account of them as Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God, for the Honour and Respect, the Obedience and Duty that are given to these are given to the Lord Christ himself, as he himself assures us, *He that beareth you, beareth me, and the honours that is given to Christ shall return an hundred fold into the bosom of him that gives it, Luke 10. 16.* Would to God that all Congregations had such Stewards and Pastors, and that all Stewards had such a Family and Congregation, each discharging these Duties here discoursed of; for so 'twould fare very well with the Church of God.

F I N I S.

